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ABSTRACT

Directions, suggested materials, and illustrations are given for making paper mache pinatas and masks, cascarones, Ojos de Dios, maracas, dresser scarf embroidery, burlap murals, yarn designs, paper plate trays, paper cut designs, the poppy, sarape aprons, and paper Mexican dolls. Filled with candy and broken, the pinata is used on most Mexican festive occasions. Masks were very important in Mexico's primitive cultures. Used in fiestas and carnivals, cascarones are confetti-filled eggshells which add a gaiety and color to the occasion and are usually broken over the head of a loved one. Hand-made maracas are an art project which can be used for music and game time. A weaving art of various Indian groups of the Western Hemisphere, the Ojos de Dios ("Eyes of God") were used as good luck charms in the homes. Dresser scarf embroidery, a type of Mexican handicraft, is becoming a lost art. Murals are very much a part of Mexican art. Wall hangings of yarn on burlap, a popular folkart sold in Mexico, are simple designs outlined with yarn. The paper plates actually look like the wooden lacquered trays used in Mexican homes and can be used as table decorations or snack trays. Paper cut designs which are similar to "snowflakes" can be seen hanging in the placitas during the Christmas festivals in Mexico. The poppy is one of the many colorful crepe paper flowers made and sold by women and young girls in Mexico. The paper Mexican dolls can be used to hang on the Christmas tree. (NQ)

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MEXICAN FOLKART FOR CHILDREN

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PAPER MACHE PIÑATA

Filled with candy and broken, the piñata is used on most festive occasions.

I. Suggested materials:

balloons
wheat paste
newspapers
crepe or tissue paper
white glue
scissors

II. Directions:

1. This activity may be tried with various age groups; its success will depend on the teacher's ability to adapt it to her students' age level. Intermediate grade students will enjoy working in groups, each group making its own piñata. Use the larger balloons with these students. Primary grade children may work in groups or individually, each child working with a small balloon.

2. To begin, have students tear newspapers into small strips and prepare the wheat paste by adding water until it becomes a creamy mixture. As the students work with the paste, it forms into lumps; therefore, water should be added from time to time. This paste will keep only for a couple of days. If kept longer, it begins to spoil.

3. Having inflated and tied the balloons, the students then cover them with the strips dipped in paste. After three or four layers have been applied, the balloons should be set to dry. This takes about two to three days, preferably outside each day. If, after drying, the balloons do not have a hard shell, then two more layers of paper and paste should be applied. Once the shell has hardened, the balloon is popped by pricking it with a pin. Next, cut a hole big enough to insert candies, nuts, and small toys at one end of the shell.

4. Each child should be encouraged to decorate his piñata with an original design. He may want to paint the shell and create an interesting head or animal, using construction paper for the facial features and yarn

for the hair. The following is one way in which students may decorate. However, they should be encouraged to come up with their own ideas.

5. Cut bands of crepe paper about 2" wide and 15" long. Make vertical snips along the crepe paper band and curl these. Primary grade children will have trouble curling with scissors. Beginning at the bottom and working up, the student pastes the crepe paper around the shell, making sure that the curled edges face the outside. This is repeated using as many colors as desired until the entire shell is covered.

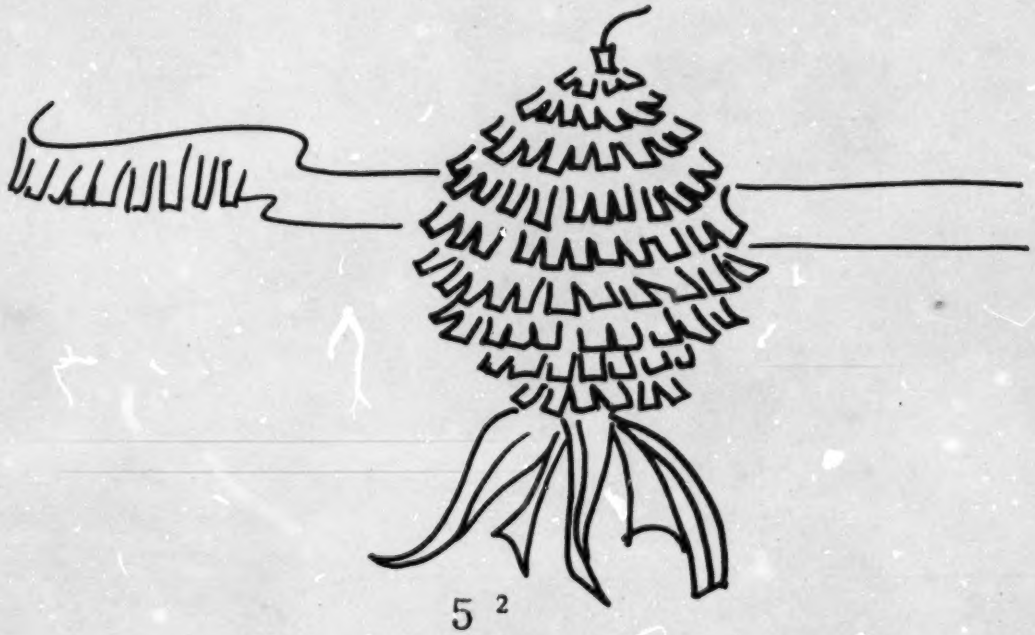
III. Variations:

1. Use torn pieces of colored tissue paper and liquid starch instead of newspaper and wheat paste. This is especially suited to young children. It will be easier to break and no decorations are actually needed, since the colored tissues form a design of their own.

2. Use oatmeal boxes, cardboard cones, or any container as the frame of the piñata, in place of the balloon.

3. After one or two layers of newspaper, wrap the balloon with wire or string dipped into the wheat paste. Then continue with layers of newspaper. The frame will give extra strength to the shell when dry.

4. Using tissue paper, cut long strips about 4" wide. Fold each strip in half and make fringe cuts along the folded side. Open the strip, turn it inside-out, and glue the unfringed edges along the length of the strip. These puffy fringed strips can be glued around the shell, beginning at the base and wrapping upwards.



PAPER MACHE MASKS

Discuss with students the importance of masks in primitive cultures.

I. Suggested materials:

newspapers
wheat paste or flour
masking tape
yarn of assorted colors
acrylic gesso
tempra paints of assorted colors
clear shellac

II. Directions:

1. Begin the mask by taking a newspaper sheet and forming it into the desired shape for the mask. Hold the shape with masking tape.

2. To make the features, wad pieces of newspaper, shaping them into eyes, mouth, nose, cheekbones, etc. Attach the features to the mask with masking tape. Students should be encouraged to use their imagination in creating their masks.

3. Prepare the wheat paste by mixing with water to a creamy consistency. If flour is used, add a small amount of white glue to the paste.

4. Tear newspapers into small strips. (Do not cut with scissors). Dip strips in paste mixture. Take off excess paste by running the strips through your fingers.

5. Apply the strips to the frame of the mask, covering the front and back of the mask. Apply two more layers of newspaper strips. Do not dry between layers.

6. Let the masks dry. They may be put in a 200° oven to speed up the drying process.

7. Apply a coat of gesso to cover the newspaper print.

8. The most exciting part of this activity now begins. Students paint their masks, giving distinction to the features and giving expression to what was once before an impersonal frame.

9. The final step is to apply a coat of shellac to the mask.

CASCARONES

Used in fiestas and carnivals, these confetti-filled eggshells add a gaiety and color to the occasion. They are usually broken over the head of someone for whom there is affection.

I. Suggested materials:

eggshells
confetti
egg dye or food colors
tissue or crepe paper
white glue
scissors

II. Directions:

1. Break a small opening in the smaller end of the egg. Let the contents drain through (use the eggs in cooking). Rinse the eggshell with water and drain upside down to dry.

2. Color the eggshells with egg dye or food coloring in hot water. The longer the eggshell sits in the coloring, the darker the color will be. Allow to dry before decorating.

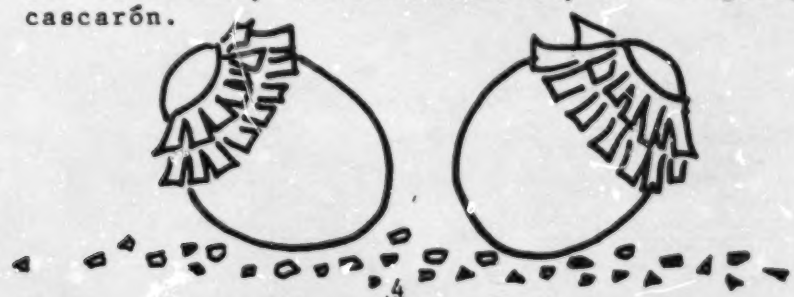
3. Fill the eggshell about 1/3 full with confetti.

4. Cut a small circle of tissue or crepe paper and glue over the opening. Cut 3" strips of the paper, fold and fringe along the folded edge. Turn inside out and glue the uncut edges together all along the strip, making a puffy fringe as in the piñatas. Glue these strips around the opening in the egg shell.

III. Variations:

1. Use wax crayons to draw designs on the egg shells before coloring.

2. The combination of colors and tissue papers will allow for creativity and individuality in designing each cascarón.



MARACAS

Hand-made maracas are an art project which can be used for music and game time. An unlimited variety of designs and fillings are possible.

I. Suggested materials:

empty milk cartons (individual containers)
filling (beans, rice, marbles, etc.)
wooden tongue depressors
stapler
masking tape
crepe paper
scissors
white glue

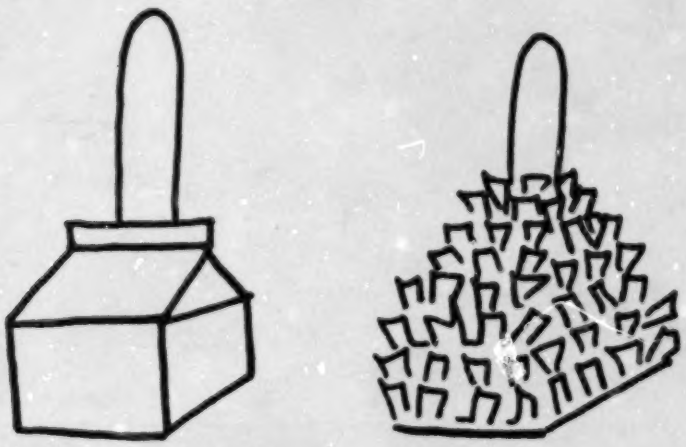
II. Directions:

1. Fill the milk carton with a small amount of beans, rice, marbles, etc. Check the sound by holding closed and shaking.

2. Staple a tongue depressor into the opening to be used for the handle. Tape shut any openings.

3. Cut 3" or 4" strips of crepe paper. Fringe along one edge and curl, as for a piñata.

4. Glue the strips around the milk carton, covering up the container and creating a design. The flat end will need to be covered first with a square of the crepe paper.



OJOS DE DIOS

A weaving art of various indian groups of the western hemisphere, the ojos de dios, or "eyes of God," were used as good luck charms in the homes.

I. Suggested materials:

dowels
yarn in various colors
wire or masking tape

II. Directions:

1. Cut the dowels (2) to the desired length.

2. Hold the dowels together, side by side, and tie them in the middle with yarn, wire, or masking tape. Open to form right angles.

3. Begin at the center with one color of yarn and wrap 5 or 6 times diagonally in one direction, then 5 or 6 times diagonally in the opposite direction. Be careful to keep the dowels at right angles.

4. Hold the frame with the right side facing you, and wrap each arm of the frame individually as you turn the frame clockwise.

5. Wrap each arm by pulling the yarn tightly to the next arm, across that arm, completely around, and on to the next arm.

6. Continue wrapping the ojo, always in the same direction, until you desire to change the color of the yarn. Finish one yarn color by knotting the yarn around an arm of the frame.

7. Begin wrapping with another yarn color. Changing colors gives each ojo its unique design.

8. Decorate each end of the ojo with fluffs of yarn made by winding the yarn around your fingers many times. Tie around the middle and cut open.

III. Variations

Variations of the ojo can be created by varying the stick material (such as using popsicle sticks, toothpicks, etc.), by varying the number of arms (4, 6, 8), or by varying the length of the arms and adding additional crosses.

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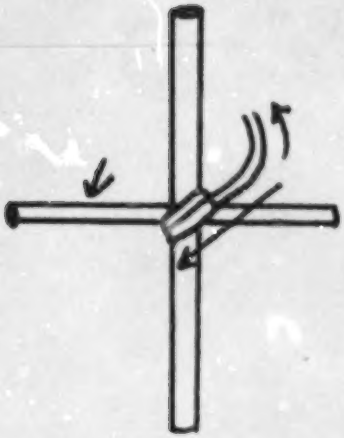

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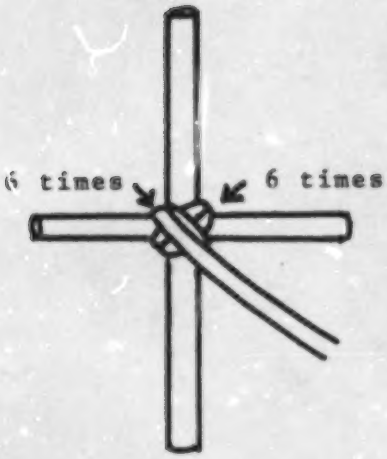

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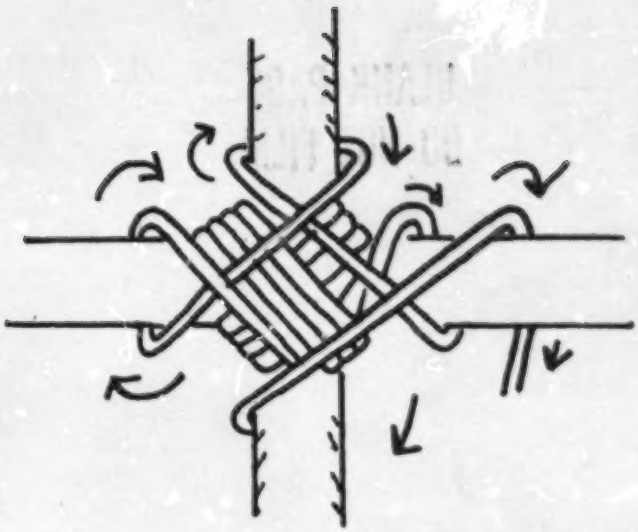

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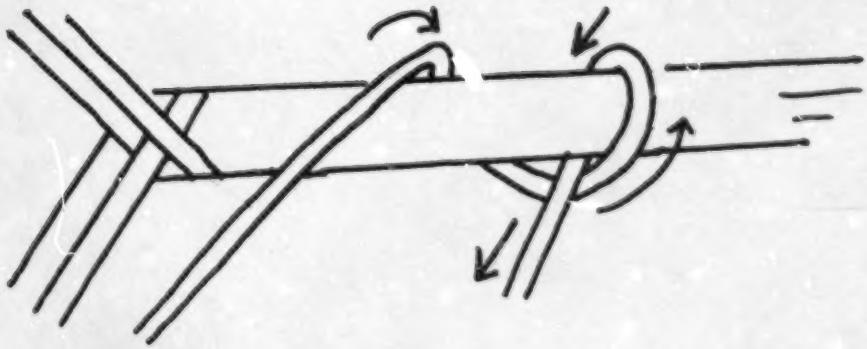

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DRESSER SCARF EMBROIDERY

This type of Mexican handicraft is becoming a lost art.

I. Suggested materials:

cotton cloth
embroidery threads
needles
metal hoops
tagboard

II. Directions:

1. Pre-cut the cloth to a desired length and width.
2. Have each student plan his design on paper. The design should be kept simple.
3. An approach the child could take would be to repeat a shape or design to create a pattern.
4. The embroidery design should grow out of the stitches used.
5. Students may create a feeling of texture by combining stitches in various ways.
6. To finish the embroidery, the student can hem the edges or pull the threads from the edges.

BURLAP MURALS

Murals are very much a part of Mexican art. You may wish to experiment with different media.

I. Suggested materials:

burlap (a neutral color is preferable)
tempra paint
brushes

II. Directions:

1. Mural-making, a popular art activity in the elementary grades, can be even more exciting if done with burlap. Its heavy texture gives this porous material an ideal surface on which to draw or paint.

2. Since several children work on a mural, it is important that they discuss and plan together, so that it becomes one composition rather than several isolated pictures painted together. Encourage children to bring attention to important objects by painting them larger.

III. Variations:

Have children cut objects out of different fabrics and either glue or sew them onto burlap.

YARN DESIGNS

Wall hangings of yarn on burlap are a popular folkart sold in Mexico. Choose simple designs which can be outlined with yarn. The choice of colors can vary and determine the final effect.

I. Suggested materials:

burlap (finish edges) or sisal
yarn or roving in colors desired
white glue
pencil or chalk
scissors

II. Directions:

1. Sketch or trace the design onto the burlap with chalk or a pencil.

2. Taking sections of the design at a time, lay a steady stream of glue along the lines sketched.

3. Immediately lay a section of the desired color of yarn along the glue line, cutting it at the end of the line.

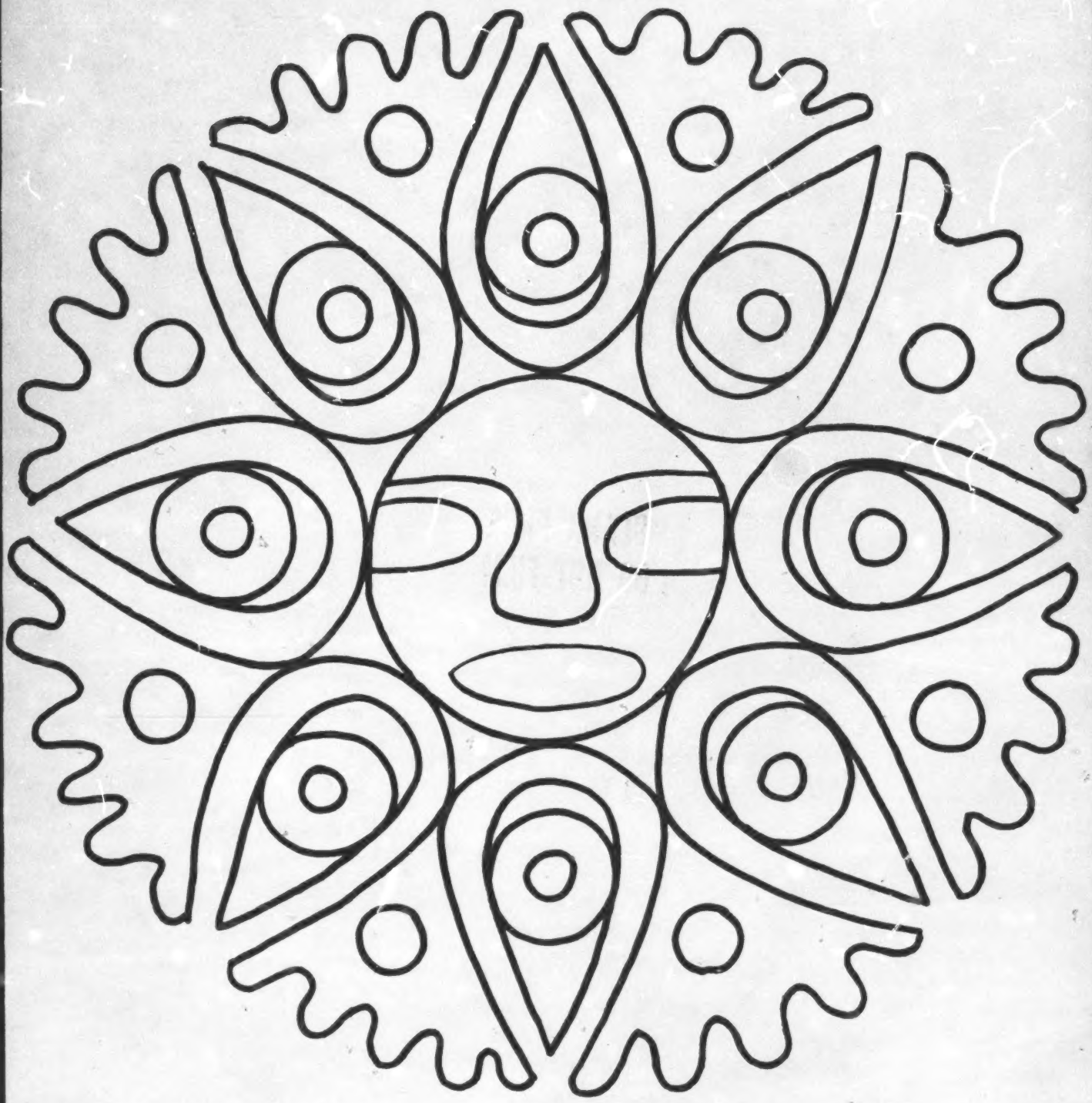
III. Variations:

1. Less permanent, but quicker, projects can be made by gluing the yarn design to construction paper instead of burlap (black is especially effective).

2. Flannel and bulletin boards can be decorated by using the yarn design on a felt-covered board in place of burlap.

3. The size and texture of the yarn will vary the design and its effect. A thick cotton yarn is suggested for large wall designs.

SAMPLE YARN ART DESIGN



PAPER PLATE TRAYS

These inexpensive designs on paper plates actually look like the wooden laquered trays and can be used as table decorations and snack trays.

I. Suggested materials:

paper plates, any size
black paint (hi-gloss is preferable) in spray cans
acryllic paints, bright pastel colors
varathane in spray can
brushes
newspapers for working surface
turpentine for cleaning brushes

II. Directions:

1. Spray or paint the paper plate black. Allow to dry.
2. With brushes, paint the flower design in bright pastel colors. Use swift, wide strokes. Encourage individuality.
3. For added gloss, or if a flat black paint was used, spray the finished tray with varathane.

PAPER CUT DESIGNS

These cut-and-fold designs are similar to "snowflakes" and may be made with various kinds of paper. Made in various shapes with tissue paper, they can be seen hanging in the placitas during the Christmas festivals in Mexico.

I. Suggested materials:

tissue or construction paper
scissors

II. Directions:

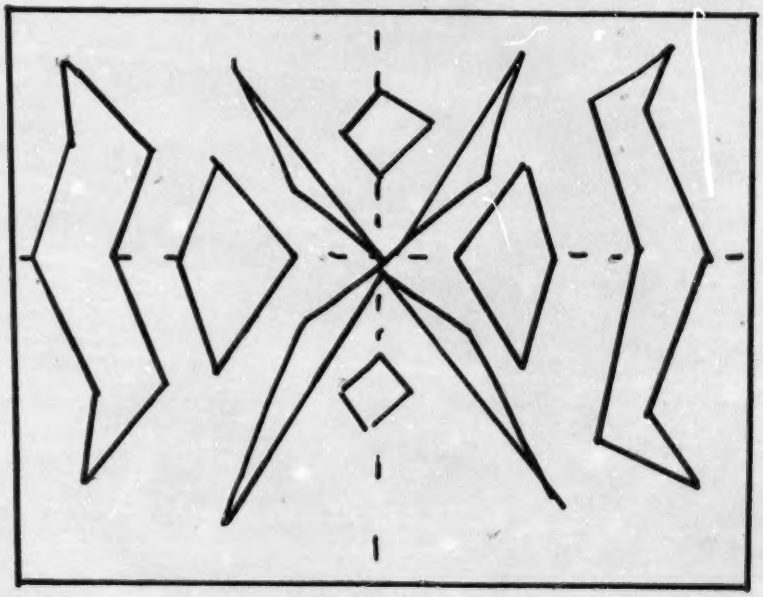
1. Begin with a square of tissue paper. Fold in half, then in half again.

2. Cut designs into the two folded edges. Open out for the full design.

III. Variations:

1. Depending on use, choose different kinds of paper. Tissue is lighter and better for hanging across the room on string. Construction paper is better for place mats.

2. Alternate colors for the occasion (e.g. red, white, and green for Cinco de Mayo).



POPPY

The poppy is but one of the many colorful crepe paper flowers made and sold by women and young girls.

I. Suggested materials:

crepe paper (red or any color desired)
floral wire for stems
string, thin wire, or rubber bands for tying

II. Directions:

1. Cut a 6" strip of crepe paper before unfolding the roll.
2. Still before unfolding, slit the sides down 4 1/2".
3. Round off both corners before unfolding the petals.
4. Unfold the crepe paper and cut a strip 12 petals long.
5. Cut this 12-petal strip in half, so that you have two strips of 6 petals each.
6. Take another strip of paper about 3" wide and 4" long. Cut narrow slits to make stamens. Roll each slit or leave as is.
7. Take the two strips of petals and gather them around the stamen to form the flower. Shape as you gather.
8. Tie with string, thin wire, or rubber bands.
9. Put a heavy wire through for the stem and finish with green paper. This strip of crepe paper makes 2 1/2 flowers.

SARAPE APRONS

For younger children, messy projects require aprons. These colorful, absorbent ones made from towels are easy to put on and remove, and they can be thrown in the washing machine for easy cleaning.

I. Suggested materials:

towels (one per apron)
scissors
thread
seam binding (colors coordinated with towels)

II. Directions:

1. Cut a slit lengthwise down the center of the towel for approximately 12" or long enough to slip easily over the head.

2. Bind the slit opening with seam binding.

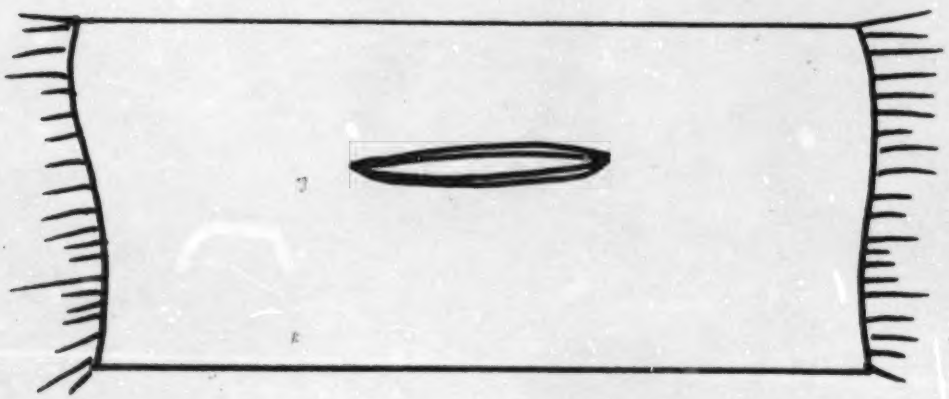
3. Ties or belts of seam binding are optional and may be attached to the sides of the front.

III. Variations:

1. Choice of towel designs and colors determine the effect. Choose bright, colorful stripes or designs.

2. Braid and fringe can be added if decorating a plain towel.

3. Buying new towels is not necessary. Used, donated towels can make inexpensive aprons.



MEXICAN DOLL PATTERNS

These reproductions of postcard costume designs can serve many purposes and projects. One suggestion is to color and add angel wings for the Christmas tree.

I. Suggested materials:

doll patterns on heavy white cardboard
water colors
felt tip pens
scissors

II. Directions:

1. The patterns are already printed on heavier paper and are ready for coloring. Colors of costumes are often culturally significant, so follow the color guide for authenticity.

2. The first step in coloring on the patterns is to water paint the faces, hands, feet and skin parts with a flesh-colored tone, usually obtained by watering down brown. Brush it on almost dry to the skin areas.

3. Color the costumes with felt tip water color pens, using smaller sized ones if necessary for the smaller areas.

4. Water color washes, streaking a pale color on the white areas, will add highlights.

5. Cut out.

III. Variations:

1. Enlarged on an overhead projector, these patterns can be used to decorate rooms and bulletin boards.

2. If the patterns are copied onto other paper, either with pencil or ditto, the lines need to be outlined with a black (Flair) nylon tip pen. Make sure, however, that this is the <u>last</u> step done when coloring the dolls, for the colors bleed with the black when wet.

boots
yellow
serape
varied
suit
black
trim
yellow
bag
black & white
bow
blue
border
pink
hair
black
hair
brown
hat
black
white & yellow
trim
ribbons
pink
upper skirt
green
cacti
green
flowers
gold
lower skirt
red
ruffle
white
shawl
white
red & green
stripes
ribbons
blue & orange
hat
brown
shawl
white
design
black &
white

hat
green
hair
black
ribbons
blue
dress white
hair
brown
suit
white
shawl
pink
watermelon
red and green
pants
white
border
green
border
green
border purple
hair
bright pink
hair
black
suit
white
border
pink
bird
purple, pink
& green
pants
white
flowers
blue

watermelon varied
hair brown
headress white
ribbons pink
dress white
flowers blue
leaves green
centers gold
flags varied
ruffle white
braids blue, green & gold
hat gold
border gold
pants white
poncho white
ruffle purple
border gold
serape purple & pink
ribbons pink
poncho white
suit white
trim orange
skirt orange
hair brown
skirt white
jug black & brown
hat green
trim orange

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